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Statement submitted by Presbyterian Church USA, a non-governmental organization in consultative status with the Economic and Social Council

The Secretary-General has received the following statement, which is being circulated in accordance with paragraphs 30 and 31 of Economic and Social Council resolution 1996/31.

* E/2014/1/Rev.1, annex II.

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Statement

Poverty and hunger continue to plague our society. Although significant progress has been made through the Millennium Development Goals in decreasing the number of persons who live in extreme poverty or hunger, there is more to do.

Traditional aid programmes have failed to address the root causes of poverty and hunger around world. Without social and economic change, the wealthy will continue to grow exponentially wealthier while the poor will continue to remain marginalized.

Presbyterian Church USA recognizes the challenges that exist in ensuring access to quality education, employment, health and decision-making. We ask Governments to remove economic barriers to women's educational success and promote the equitable sharing of authority and responsibilities in family life, work and society, as well as a more equitable sharing of economic and political power.

Progress has been made on health issues, but the issue of women's access to health services remains vitally important. Presbyterian Church USA affirms the human rights of women, including their right to access comprehensive sexual and reproductive health education and services, without discrimination or violence. We recognize that violence against women and girls continues to be a challenge for the global development agenda. We continue to support the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women and encourage Governments to do the same.

Presbyterian Church USA and its global, faith-based development partners have been engaged in development work for nearly two centuries. Recently, there has been an increased effort to address the underlying causes of hunger and malnutrition, the diseases of poverty and growing inequality in much of the world. Presbyterian Church USA has participated in "safe motherhood" initiatives aimed at reducing maternal and newborn mortality and morbidity. It has partnered with others to provide surgical assistance to women who have developed obstetric fistulas. Presbyterians have also worked to raise awareness and educate about HIV infection, to reduce stigma and discrimination and to provide counselling, testing and treatment. We have worked to demonstrate appropriate food production methods, such as urban intensive gardening. Presbyterians have developed safe water supplies and hygiene systems in communities, including hygiene systems to help girls stay in school.

In West Africa, Presbyterian Church USA and ecumenical partners are involved in an initiative to address poverty and hunger. The goal of the initiative is to strengthen the capacity of rural community groups to develop food production systems that make them self-reliant by providing training for facilitators. Once trained, the facilitators go back to their communities and educate community groups to effect change.

Presbyterian Church USA encourages stronger partnerships with faith-based organizations in work aimed at achieving the Millennium Development Goals and in planning for the post-2015 development agenda. It seeks a kind of globalization that reflects the values of justice, community and the sustainability of creation. Thus, we encourage Governments to support measures by the community of nations and civil society to improve international governance, manage technology for the common good, support fair exchanges in trade policy, make development assistance more effective and protect workers and vulnerable groups.